

Jolanta PUŁKA

Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University

Leszek ŚWIECA

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Faculty of Management and Social Communication

ETHICAL STANDARDS IN STUDENTS' PERCEPTION – SELECTED ASPECTS

Introduction

The considerations of the interpersonal functioning of students, relations established by them, especially relations with the lecturers in the college (a university, a university-level school, an academy), induced us to review the aspects of perception of ethics and ethical standards, determine by the academic community. The ethics of functioning in the world was important for us, understanding the term of "good", which in the daily reality is the opposite of "bad".¹ Assuming the premises of utilitarianism, as of one the most important and the most popular theories of morality, it is presumed that an action is morally just if more benefits are produced than damages for all the parties (the unit and the community). The best actions, or morally just ones, are these that maximise benefits for all the interested and minimise damages or incurred costs. The very idea, however, assumes pro-social action in the sense that the unit acting for oneself is also acting for "non-I" entities (the good of others, social good), because both directions of actions are immanently interrelated.

In many studies, as noticed by B. Wojciszke and W. Baryła² the countless number of interpretation categories are used to interpret behaviour of the other. Whereas, in the opinion of the said authors "*valuing another person is based on two independent types of content categories*:

- *moral categories: based on identification (praiseworthy or reprehensible) of the purpose / intention of the observed person,*
- *performance categories: based on recognising the degree of effectiveness achieved in the pursuit of this purpose*".³

A large number of studies proves that these two categories play the most important role in perceiving others.⁴ In our study, we wanted to check how students perceive ethical values in behaviour of academic teachers, how observation of these behaviours, contact with the teacher in the process of education affect ethics in behaviour of students, their moral judgments. Based on the results of the studies conducted by B. Wojciszke and W. Baryła⁵ almost 100% of behaviour of moral nature may be explained referring to 3 codes of ethics: **ethics of autonomy, ethics of common good and ethics of dignity**. This is why we present selected aspects

¹ S. M. Cahn, P. J. Markie, *Ethics: History, Theory, and, Contemporary Issues*. New York 2002, p. 461

² B. Wojciszke, W. Baryła, *Potoczne rozumienie moralności: pięć kodów etycznych i narzędzie ich pomiaru*, „Przegląd Psychologiczny”. 2000, tom 43, nr 4, pp. 395-421

³ Ibidem, p.395

⁴ B. Wojciszke, *Multiple meanings of behavior: Construing actions in terms of competence and morality*. "Journal of Personality and social Psychology". 67, pp. 222-232

⁵ Ibidem, pp. 395-421

related to ethical standards, behaviour of academic teachers perceived by students are presented in this paper.

Codes of ethics constitute the master patterns with which moral behaviour is assessed.⁶ Each code has its own content domain, relatively independent of the others, built around some central value that determines positiveness vs negativeness of typical behaviours.⁷

Ethics of autonomy considers the good of another to be the central value, among such virtues as: respect for good, freedom and rights of the individual, helping others, loyalty to the individual.

Ethics of common good places the good of the community as the whole in the central spot, among others against the background of respecting standards, law, truth, equality.

Ethics of dignity for which the central value is living a decent life, with virtues important to it: spirituality, honour, contempt for material values.⁸

Methodological aspects of the research

The presented theoretical grounds became the reason to initiate the study of ethical codes and the factors that differentiate it. We attempt in this paper to reply to the study problems that we have formulated in the form of questions:

What is the level of intensity of ethical codes (in the aspect of ethic of autonomy, ethic of common good, ethic of dignity) in the process of education of students of pedagogy in Polish colleges/university in the context of the assumed results of education in pedagogy?

What is the level of intensity of ethical codes in the process of education of students of pedagogy in Polish colleges/university in terms of the level of education?

What differences may occur between the level of intensity of ethical codes and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers?

We have assumed the following hypotheses:

H1: The level of intensity of ethics of autonomy in students of pedagogy will be high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy.⁹

H2: The level of intensity of ethics of common good in students of pedagogy will be high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy.¹⁰

H3: The level of intensity of ethics of dignity in students of pedagogy will be high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy.¹¹

H4: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of the level of education.

⁶ Ibidem, pp. 395-421

⁷ A.nOleszkowicz, O.nBąk, A.nKeplinger, *Maksymalizm moralny w percepcji młodzieży i seniorów*, „Psychologia Rozwojowa”. 2005, tom 10, nr 2, p. 135-145

⁸ Ibidem, pp. 395-421

⁹ Annexes to the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education: 4.11.2011r. (position: 1521), *Wzorcowe efekty kształcenia dla kierunku studiów Pedagogika studia pierwszego i drugiego stopnia*.

¹⁰ Ibidem

¹¹ Ibidem

H5: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of common good in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of the level of education.

H6: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of dignity in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of the level of education.

H7: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of the students perception of ethical behave their lecturers (in the declared assessment of the students).

H8: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of common good in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of students perception of ethical behave their lecturers (in the declared assessment of the students).

H9: On the basis of theoretical analyses, significant differences are expected in the level of intensity of ethics of dignity in students of pedagogy between the average values in the compared groups, varied in terms of students perception of ethical behave their lecturers (in the declared assessment of the students).

These hypotheses determine the space of variables that we conventionally call:

Dependent variables:

X_1 (level of ethics of autonomy). Indicator: the result obtained in the Ethics Questionnaire.

X_2 (level of ethics of common good). Indicator: the result obtained in the Ethics Questionnaire.

X_3 (level of ethics of dignity). Indicator: the result obtained in the Ethics Questionnaire.

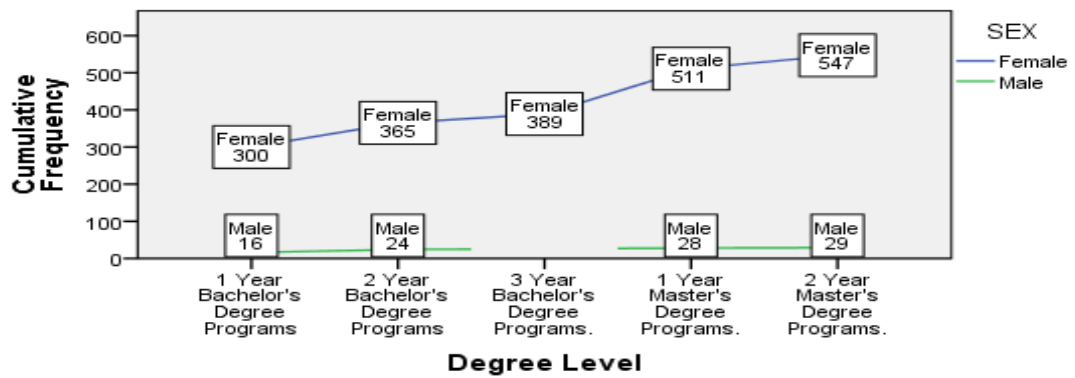
Independent variables:

Y_1 – level of education. Indicator: the level of education declared in the questionnaire.

Y_2 – students perception of ethical behaviour of their lecturers. Indicator: the answer by the subject to the question in the questionnaire: What do you think, do your lecturers usually behave ethically? (categorisation of answers: yes 2, rather yes 1, neutral 0, rather no –1, no –2).

The study included students of universities and colleges from the area of the Silesian and Małopolskie voivodeships (sample $N = 577$).¹² They were studying pedagogy, mostly women ($n = 547$). The study was conducted in 2015 and 2016. The sample was selected randomly. The data that take into consideration the level of the studies and the gender of the respondents are presented in the following chart (Fig. 1)

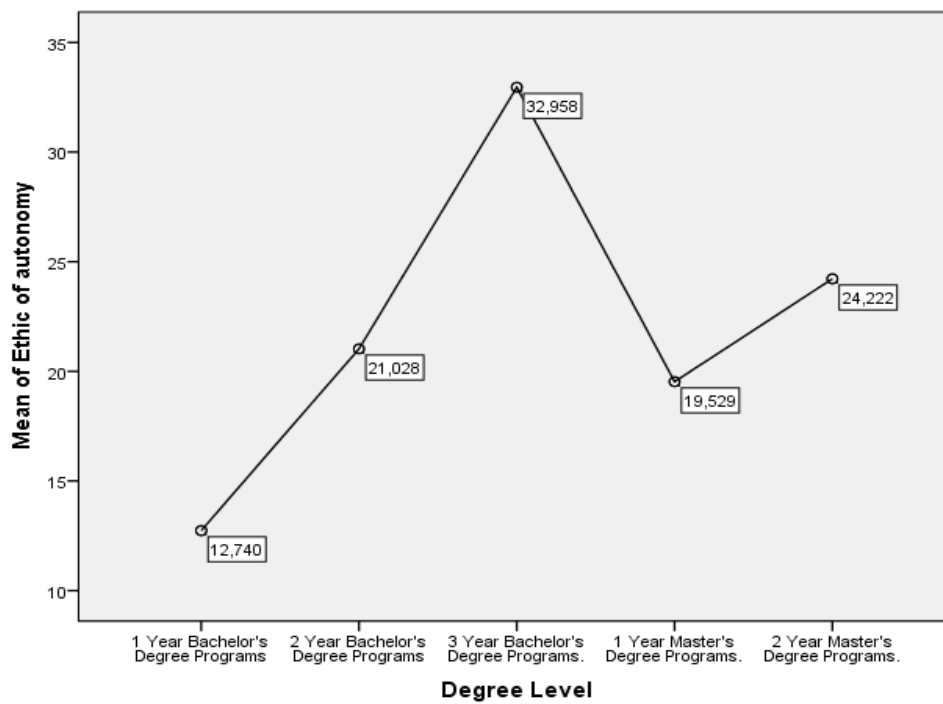
¹² Not all respondents answered the question, which is why the number of respondents is given in each chart with the answers (n) to indicator questions.

Figure 1: characteristics of the research sample (N=577)

Source: own research, 2015-2016

Results

Ethics of autonomy

Figure 2: ethics of autonomy and the level of education (N=577)

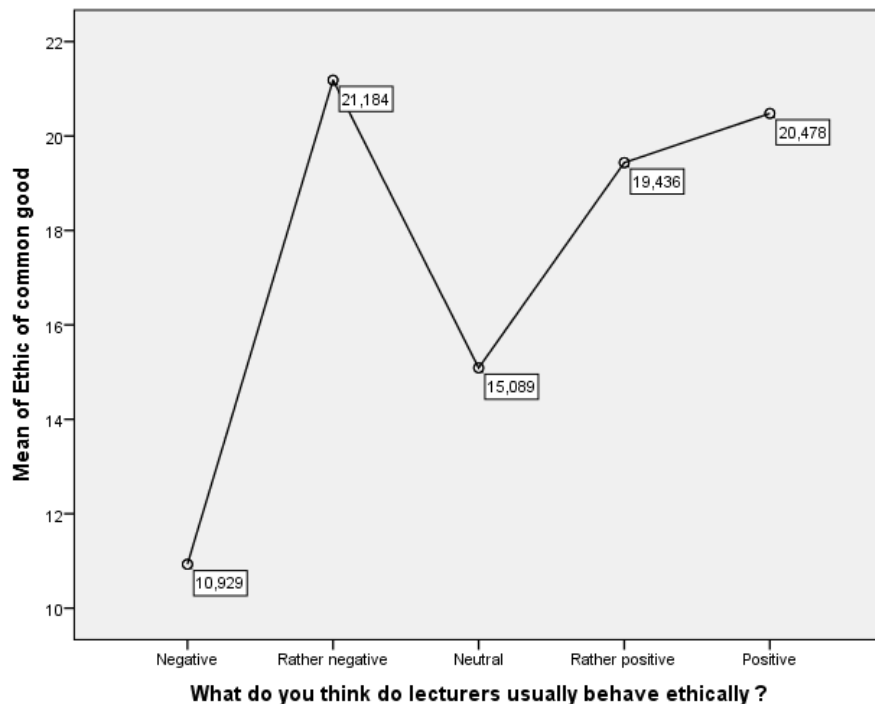
Source: own research, 2015-2016

The results of the student were in the range 13-33. On the basis of the obtained results, we can conclude about the low level of ethics of autonomy, because the maximum number of points in this scale was 63. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis H1 that the level of intensity of ethic of autonomy in students of pedagogy is high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy.

To confirm the differences between the average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was statistically significant difference between the ethic of autonomy by degree level ($H(2)=58,968$, $p=0,000$; $\eta_H^2=0,099$), with a mean rang of 232,53 for 1 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 314,62 for 2 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 425,85 for 3 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 301,07 for 1 Year Master's Degree Programs, 350,28 for 2 Year Master's Degree Programs.

Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H4 test hypothesis is to be confirmed that the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the level of education.

Figure 3: Eehics of common goods and students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers (n = 548)

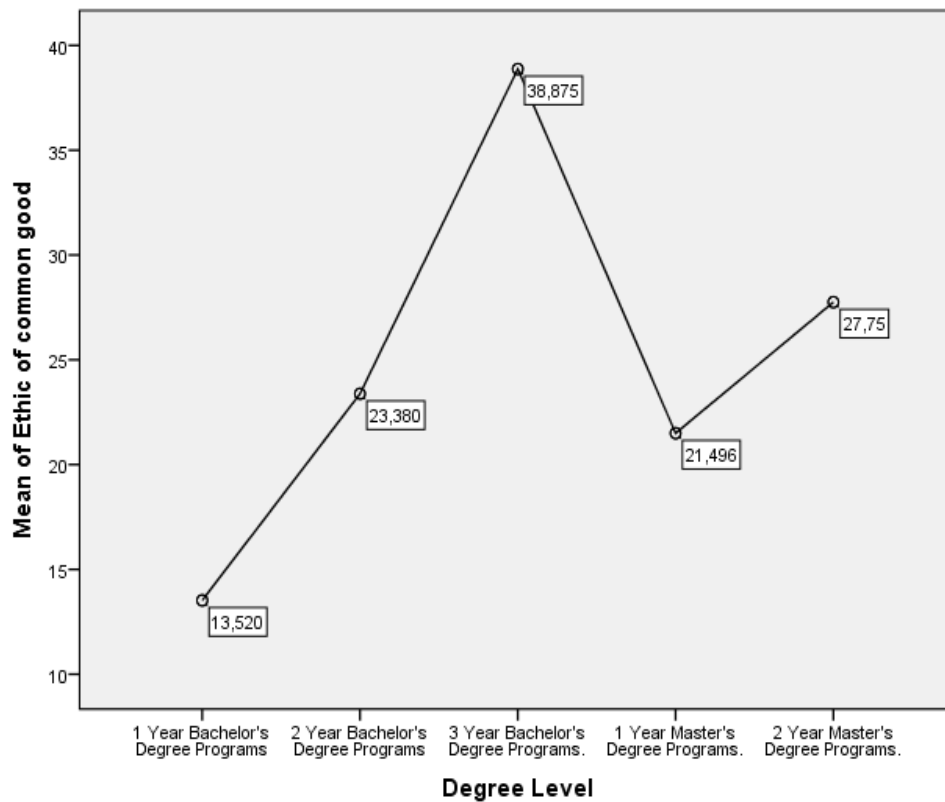


Source: own research, 2015-2016

To confirm the differences between the average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was no statistically significant difference between the ethic of autonomy by students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers ($H(2)=7,960$, $p=0,093$; $\eta^2_H=0,008$), with a mean rang of 175,25 for Negative, 261,46 for Rather negative, 210,28 for Neutral, 238,79 for Rather positive, 243,46 for Positive.

Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H_7 test hypothesis is to be rejected that the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers.

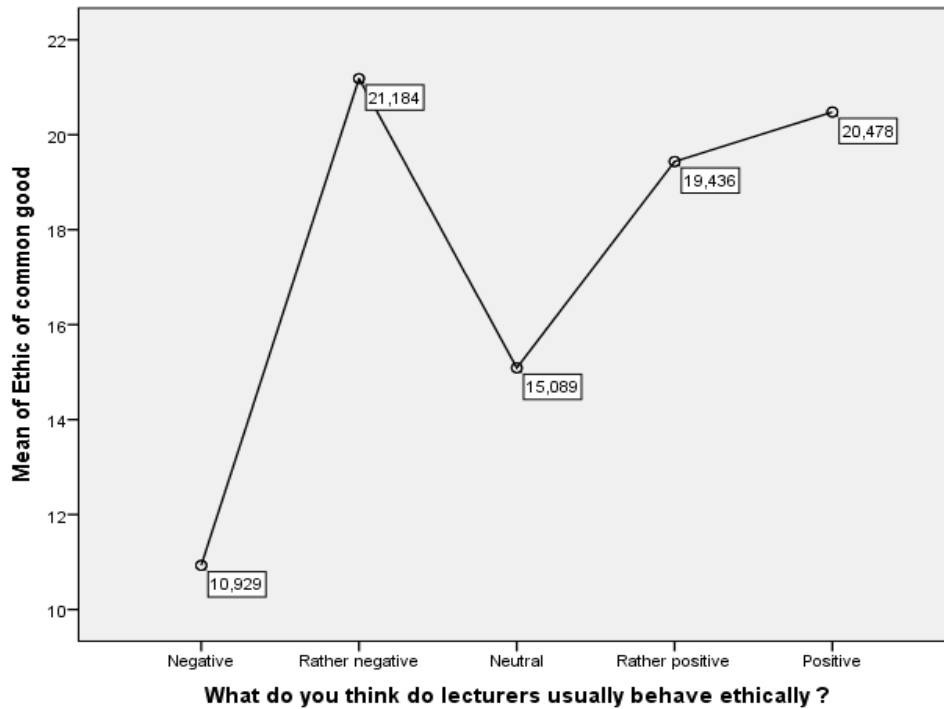
Figure 4: ethics of common goods and the level of education (N= 577)



Source: own research, 2015-2016

The results of the student were in the range 14-39. On the basis of the obtained results, we can conclude about the low level of ethics of common good, because the maximum number of points in this scale was 66. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis H2 that the level of ethic of common good in students of pedagogy is high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy. To confirm the differences between the average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was statistically significant difference between the ethic of common good by degree level ($H(2)=57,576$, $p=0,000$; $\eta^2_H=0,096$), with a mean rang of 234,54 for 1 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 316,48 for 2 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 428,27 for 3 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 299,71 for 1 Year Master's Degree Programs, 350,50 for 2 Year Master's Degree Programs. Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H5 test hypothesis is to be confirmed that the level of ethics of common good in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the level of education.

Figure 5: ethics of common good and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers (n = 550)

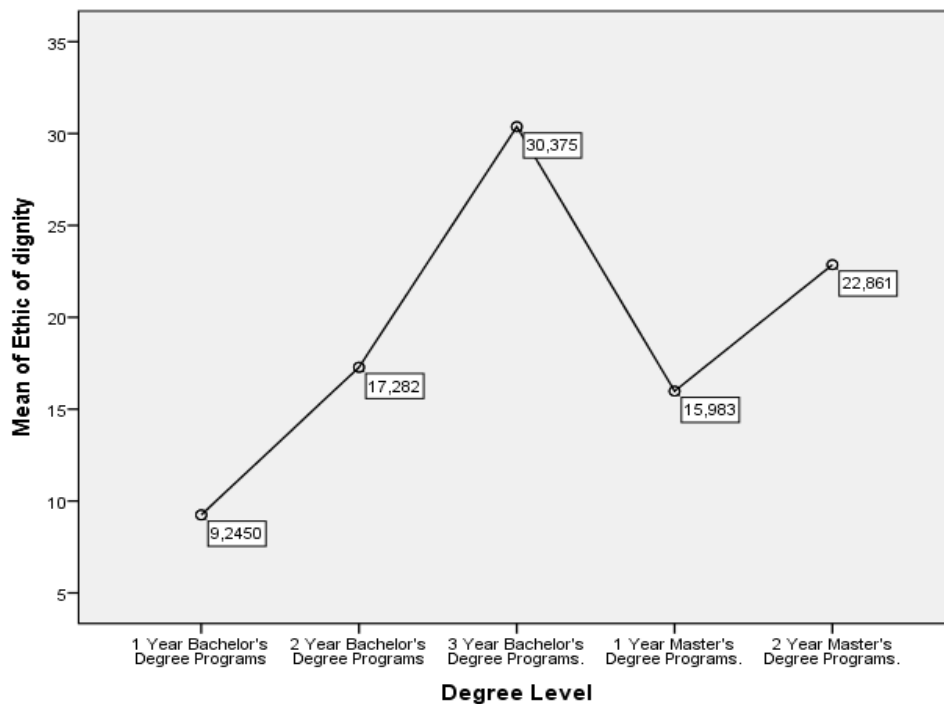


Source: own research, 2015-2016

To confirm the differences between the average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was no statistically significant difference between the ethic of common good and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers ($H(2)=7,960$, $p=0,093$; $\eta^2_H=0,008$), with a mean rang of 175,25 for Negative, 261,46 for Rather negative, 210,28 for Neutral, 238,79 for Rather positive, 243,46 for Positive. Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H_8 test hypothesis is to be rejected that the level of intensity of ethics of common good in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers.

Ethics of dignity

Figure 6: ethics of dignity and a level of education (N=577)

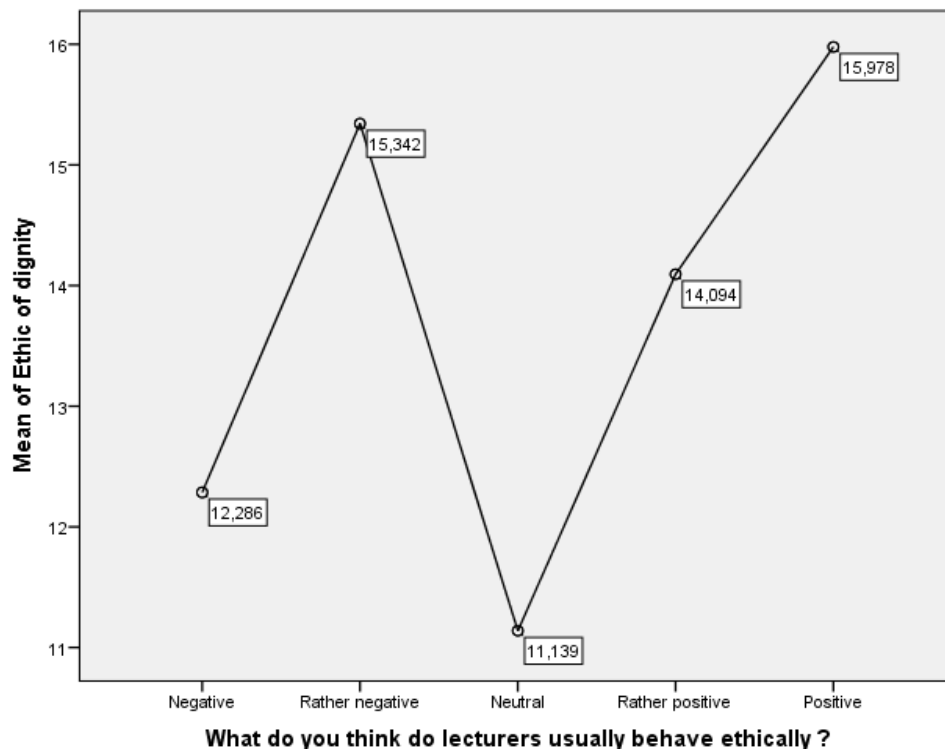


Source: own research, 2015-2016

The results of the student were in the range 9-30. On the basis of the obtained results, we can conclude about the low level of ethics of dignity, because the maximum number of points in this scale was 66. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis H_3 that the level of ethic dignity in students of pedagogy is high according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy. To confirm the differences between the

average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was statistically significant difference between the ethic of dignity by degree level ($H(2)=53,735$, $p=0,000$; $\eta^2_H=0,09$), with a mean rang of 236,98 for 1 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 306,67 for 2 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 423,92 for 3 Year Bachelor's Degree Programs, 297,45 for 1 Year Master's Degree Programs, 360,13 for 2 Year Master's Degree Programs. Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H6 test hypothesis is to be confirmed that the level of ethics of dignity in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the level of education.

Figure 7: ethics of dignity and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers (n = 550)



Source: own research, 2015-2016

To confirm the differences between the average values in the compared groups varied in terms of the level of education, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as a nonparametric alternative to the one way ANOVA. The test was used to compare the average values whose distribution is not similar to normal distribution (the variables were tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – the zero hypothesis

about parametric distribution the variables was rejected). There was no statistically significant difference between the ethic of dignity and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers ($H(2)=2,405$, $p=0,662$; $\eta_H^2=0$), with a mean rang of 222,39 for Negative, 246,83 for Rather negative, 216,26 for Neutral, 236,58 for Rather positive, 240,86 for Positive. Due to finding differences in the compared groups, the H_9 test hypothesis is to be rejected that the level of intensity of ethics dignity in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied in terms of students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers.

Summary

The results of our study showed that:

- the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy, common good and dignity is low in students of pedagogy according to the presumed effects of education in pedagogy,
- the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy, common good and dignity in students of pedagogy is statistically significantly varied by the level of education,
- the level of intensity of ethics of autonomy, common good and dignity is not statistically significantly varied in terms of students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers.

The results of the study show that the issue is worth continuing with further studies enhancing the current theoretical knowledge of students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers and its references / applications for pedagogical practice.

Summary

The purpose of this article is to attempt to answer the questions, how students perceive ethical values in behaviour of academic teachers, how observation of these behaviours, contact with the teacher in the process of education affect ethics in behaviour of students, their moral judgments. We used standardized Ethics Questionnaire by B. Wojciszke and W. Baryła for the measuring 3 ethics codes and we verified the level of ethics autonomy, ethics of common good, ethics of dignity among students and colleges from the area of the Silesian and Małopolskie voivodeships (sample $N = 577$). Participants were studying pedagogy, mostly women ($n = 547$). The study was conducted in 2015 and 2016. In this paper we analyzed the differences in the selected ethics codes and assumed results of education in pedagogy, the level of education and the students perception of ethical behave of their lecturers.

Key words: ethical standards, ethical codes, student – lecturer relationship, training process

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest próba odpowiedzi na pytania oscylujące wokół zagadnienia postrzegania przez studentów zachowań etycznych swoich wykładowców, obserwacji tych zachowań, relacji z wykładowcą w procesie kształcenia i ich oddziaływań na zachowania i sądy moralne studentów. Zastosowano w tym celu wystandaryzowany kwestionariusz Etyk autorstwa B. Wojciszke i W. Baryły do pomiaru 3 kodów etycznych: etyki autonomii, etyki dobra powszechnego, etyki godności wśród studentów uniwersytetów i szkół wyższych z terenu województwa

śląskiego i małopolskiego (próba N = 577). Badani studiowali pedagogikę, w większości były to kobiety (n = 547). Badania zostały przeprowadzone w 2015 i 2016 roku. W tym artykule zaprezentowano wybrane kody etyczne w kontekście zakładanych efektów kształcenia na kierunku pedagogika, poziomu wykształcenia i postrzegania przez studentów zachowań etycznych swoich wykładowców.

Słowa klucze: standardy etyczne, kody etyczne, relacje uczeń – mistrz, proces kształcenia

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